



DEB'S DISTRICT UPDATE

Deb Jung • District Four

February 2024

Greetings

February may be our shortest month but there is still a lot happening. The County Executive introduced a County reorganization bill that focuses on homelessness prevention, provides tenant and consumer assistance through a more robust Consumer Protection Division, and creates two brand new offices that will consolidate agricultural supports and that will oversee restitution funds from the national settlement against opioid manufacturers.

The Council also addressed a very controversial resolution to call for a ceasefire in Gaza that had many people writing and calling us either to support the Resolution that Liz Walsh filed, vote against it, or amend it. At last count, more than 1700 emails were sent to the Council on this singular issue. There is much to say about this legislation and the evening of the vote that is further detailed in this newsletter.

Finally, it is Black History Month and once again the Arena Stage is featuring a play about a black historical figure who lead a remarkable life. This year, the play, *Tempestuous Elements*, features the story of Dr. Anna Julia Cooper. She was the fourth African American woman in the United States to receive a doctorate degree and the first African American woman to do so at the Sorbonne. An advocate for black women, Dr. Cooper was born into slavery in 1858 and died at age 105, after spending a lifetime as an educational leader and challenging false beliefs of racial inferiority. Click [here](#) for more.



Dr. Anna Julia Cooper

Deb

Council Updates

The Council introduced current legislation on February 5. We also voted on legislation introduced in January.

February-March

CR19 Electric Scooter Permit Fee Reduces the permit fee from \$10,000 to \$2,000. This program was created in 2022 and had one operator that is no longer in business. The fee reduction is intended to encourage at least one successful application. *County Executive*

CB7 Government Reorganization Moves the Office of Consumer Protection to the Department of County Administration, creates an Office of Agriculture, establishes an Opioid Restitution Fund Office, and consolidates housing staff in the Department of Housing. *County Executive*

CB8 Open Meetings for Environmental Waivers Requires the Department of Planning and Zoning to hold public meetings for waivers of wetlands, streams, and steep slopes protections. *Liz Walsh*

CB9 Gas Station Pricing Requires the highest price of gas (including transactional fees) to be displayed on pricing signage. Along with Dr. Opel Jones, I co-sponsored this legislation. *Christiana Rigby.*

January-February

CB3 Cap on Damages Awards for Unlawful Employment Practices Sets a tiered cap based on the size of the company in cases of unlawful employment practices. Companies with 15 to 100 employees, awards are capped at \$50,000; 101 to 200, \$100,000; 201-500, \$200,000; more than 501, \$300,000. *County Executive; tabled*

CB4 Elimination of MIHU Loopholes I voted to support this bill because the County's moderate income housing unit (MIHU) program is in need of reform if it is going to be successful. This bill deleted the loopholes that allow developers to build affordable units on different sites, in different ratios, as disability units, or pay a fee-in-lieu. The bill also eliminated the ability to convert affordable units to market rate if 60 days passes without an income-qualified renter; *Liz Walsh; failed.*

Upcoming Meetings

Click [here](#) for more.



February 27, 9:30am: Work Session

March 4, 7pm: Legislative Session

March 12, 9:30am: Monthly Meeting

March 18, 7pm: Public Hearing

March 26, 9:30am: Work Session

Legislation: click [here](#).

Council Updates

CR22 Gaza Ceasefire

Council Resolution 22 demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, facilitation of humanitarian assistance, and elected officials to take immediate actions to end the humanitarian crisis. It was sponsored by Councilmember Liz Walsh and failed by a vote of three to one.

I recognize the extreme distress that this conflict has caused on our community and I offer my condolences to community members who have lost loved ones or who have experienced incidents of hate because of the conflict. I understand why residents turned to the Council for assistance in ending the brutality of the conflict but our legislative process, which has limited home rule, is not designed for such purposes.

The resolution promised something to a suffering community that is not possible. The Council does not have the legislative authority to demand a specific action from another elected body. In the past, the Council requested certain policy positions in resolutions but CR22 did not request, it *demanded* that the Federal government take actions that have been underway since the start of the conflict. The efforts to broker a peace and deliver humanitarian aid have been meet with little success and much resistance.

Before Pre-File

I met with a pro-resolution group and clearly communicated my position that I would not sponsor or support such a resolution. I explained to them that a resolution was outside



A full house inside the Banneker Room during the vote on CR22

Council Updates

our purview and, though symbolic, would be divisive for our community and would subject those who are suffering to more suffering. For this reason, I agreed with other Councilmembers that a public hearing would do nothing but subject our community to extreme viewpoints and cause more emotional pain.

In the week prior to the vote, we continued to hear from hundreds of people on both sides of the issue. Pro-resolution groups held impromptu visits to the Council office and later a press conference in front of the George Howard building.

Final Consideration

During the vote, audience members yelled at the Council, accusing us of racism and lying and chanting “shame.” As Chair, I was tasked with keeping order in the room so that we could conduct our business. I spent the week prior to the vote meeting with the Police and the Fire Marshall to ensure that the anticipat-

ed crowd was safe and orderly. The remarks that I delivered on that night can be found [here](#). Click [here](#) to view a recording of the meeting that night.

A rally outside of the building on the night of the vote was a demonstration of the good and the bad of first amendment rights. We are not accustomed to such heated exchanges for our usual business of zoning, housing, government financing, and other, frankly, wonky topics.

Following the vote, the County Executive issued a letter to President Biden calling for a ceasefire. Prior to sending the letter, the County Executive solicited input from the community. It is common for elected officials to write letters to other government entities. I am thankful that such a letter was sent from our County. The County Executive also announced a listening session town hall, which was recently postponed. Click [here](#) for more.

JOIN US FOR NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY

Community Meetings



Calvin Ball
County Executive



Howard Community College

February 27, 6-8pm, Galleria

March 14, 2-4pm, Monteabaro Hall

March 16, 12-2pm, Galleria

March 21, 6pm, Virtual

Council Updates: CR22 Gaza Ceasefire

What is a Council Resolution?

The Ceasefire Resolution raised questions for me about the scope of our legislative tools.

According to the Howard County Code, a Council Resolution is adopted by the Council and has the force and effect of law but of a temporary or administrative character (Section 914c).

Resolutions may be rejected upon introduction or withdrawn by a vote of two-thirds of the Council. A public hearing for resolutions, except appointments to boards and commissions, is not mandatory (Howard County Charter, Section 209).

Here is a profile of types of resolutions:

County Executive Business

- set fees and tax rates
- appoint members to County commissions
- adopt the annual budget, school capacity chart, and housing allocations chart
- pass the decennial General Plan
- approve Payment in Lieu of Taxes

- grant easements and convey public land
- approve State and Federal requirements for grant applications

Council Business

- amend the Charter
- call special legislative sessions
- appoint and create task forces
- set the Councilmanic redistricting process
- allow procedure changes.

Policy Requests

Council Resolutions are also used to make requests to local and state entities:

- support the Howard County Office of Law's civil action on BWI airport noise (CR36-2019; Deb Jung, Christiana Rigby)
- call upon real estate advertisers to omit references to zoned schools (CR134-2019; Opel Jones)
- call upon the Howard County Public School System to approve a plan for socioeconomic integration (CR112-2019; Opel Jones, Christiana Rigby, Deb Jung)



COUNTY EXECUTIVE CALVIN BALL'S FY24 RESIDENTS' BUDGET HEARING

March 13th | 6:00 PM

EMAIL TESTIMONY:

budgettestimony@howardcountymd.gov

I've received many emails about the proposed FY25 Operating Budget for the Howard County Public School System. This upcoming budget hearing is a good opportunity for the public to request more funding for schools.

Council Updates: CR22 Gaza Ceasefire

- Declare support for “Fight for \$15” Coalition (CR143-2020; Liz Walsh)
- encourage the County Executive to implement a “shared streets” program (CR43-2021; Liz Walsh)
- request Governor Hogan’s release of Abortion Care funds (CR102-2022; Liz Walsh)
- express support for State bills regarding the Maryland Aviation Commission (CR37-2023; Deb Jung)

Honorary Resolutions

The Council also has the ability to issue Honorary Resolutions, which recognize special events and achievements. These certificates are presented at the start of a Legislative Session, at an event, or mailed to the recipient. They are not legislative actions and do not receive a public hearing or a vote.

In 2022, Councilmember Liz Walsh requested an Honorary Resolution to recognize Ukraine Independence Day. She invited all Councilmembers to sign on and it was presented prior to a Legislative session. As a policy, my

office does not request Honorary Resolutions for national or international matters. Councils in the past have made similar informal agreements though this Council did not continue that tradition.

Since the Ukraine Honorary Resolution, the Council has revised its procedures to issue Honorary Resolutions for milestone anniversaries of an organization or dedication of a landmark; athletic championships at the State level or higher; County holidays; prestigious scholastic, artistic, or professional awards; prestigious designations earned by public institutions; and other events of the highest distinction (Howard County Council Administrative Policies & Procedures, Section 103.2). For events that don’t qualify under the new rules, a Councilmember may request a Certificate of Recognition issued directly from their office.

Click [here](#) to read the minutes from the monthly meeting adopting these rules.

If you have further questions about this process feel free to get in touch with my office.



The Howard County Chinese School recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

State Housing Bill

Senate Bill 484 Housing Expansion & Affordability Act was requested by Governor Moore for consideration during this year's General Assembly session. This bill provides density housing increases and removes zoning restrictions for certain types of affordable housing projects defined as "qualified projects." Typically density, bulk regulations, Adequate Public Facilities ordinances, and other land-use restrictions are determined by the local jurisdiction. This bill would override many local land-use laws.

Bill Details

Hearing on March 1 at 9am in front of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee; click [here](#) for more.

Key Provisions

The bill prohibits unreasonable limitations that would have a substantial adverse impact on the viability, degree of affordability, or allowable density of the qualified projects.

A local jurisdiction also may not impose on a qualified affordable housing project any unreasonable limitations or requirements.

Such limitations are specifically listed in the bill as the following:

- height
- setback
- bulk regulations
- parking
- loading, dimensional, area, or similar requirements. (7-505)

Adequate public facility ordinances may not be used to deny the permit, restrict, or limit the development of the project (7-105).

The bill defines affordable housing as units that cannot exceed 30% of a household's income for those making 60% AMI or less. Qualifying residential projects may have 30% or more housing units than are allowed in that zone.

Qualified projects include developments

- on state land with at least 50% affordable units (7-502),
- within one mile of rail station with 25% affordable units (7-503), or
- on land owned by nonprofit organizations with 50% affordable units (7-504).

Current Status of SB0484 in the State General Assembly



State Housing Bill

It is unclear which jurisdictions SB484 is targeting with its zoning and growth management prohibitions. In Howard County, APFO allows affordable housing projects to pursue a waiver from the wait period in school districts that are categorized as closed to development due to overcrowding.

The Council also approved in HoCo By Design a housing allocations chart that includes a density incentive of 25% for affordable housing projects. The Council spent many hours deliberating on how to amend the chart so that housing affordability, especially for-purchase options, could be achieved. SB484 proposes to override this decision with a 30% density bonus.

The County also has special zoning regulations for affordable housing projects in which

the Howard County Housing Commission is a general partner (Sec. 103.0.H and Sec. 128.0.J). In addition, the County offers financing assistance, from tax breaks to cash donations, to affordable housing projects.

The other component that is not considered in SB484 is the contract law concept of a common scheme of development. Jim Rouse used a common scheme of development as the master developer of Columbia. It is also used in Maple Lawn.

A common scheme divides up a defined area of land into separate lots with restrictions as to the use and development of the land through covenants. This bill may up end that scheme without thought to the consequences of the existing home owners' associations.



February is Black History Month

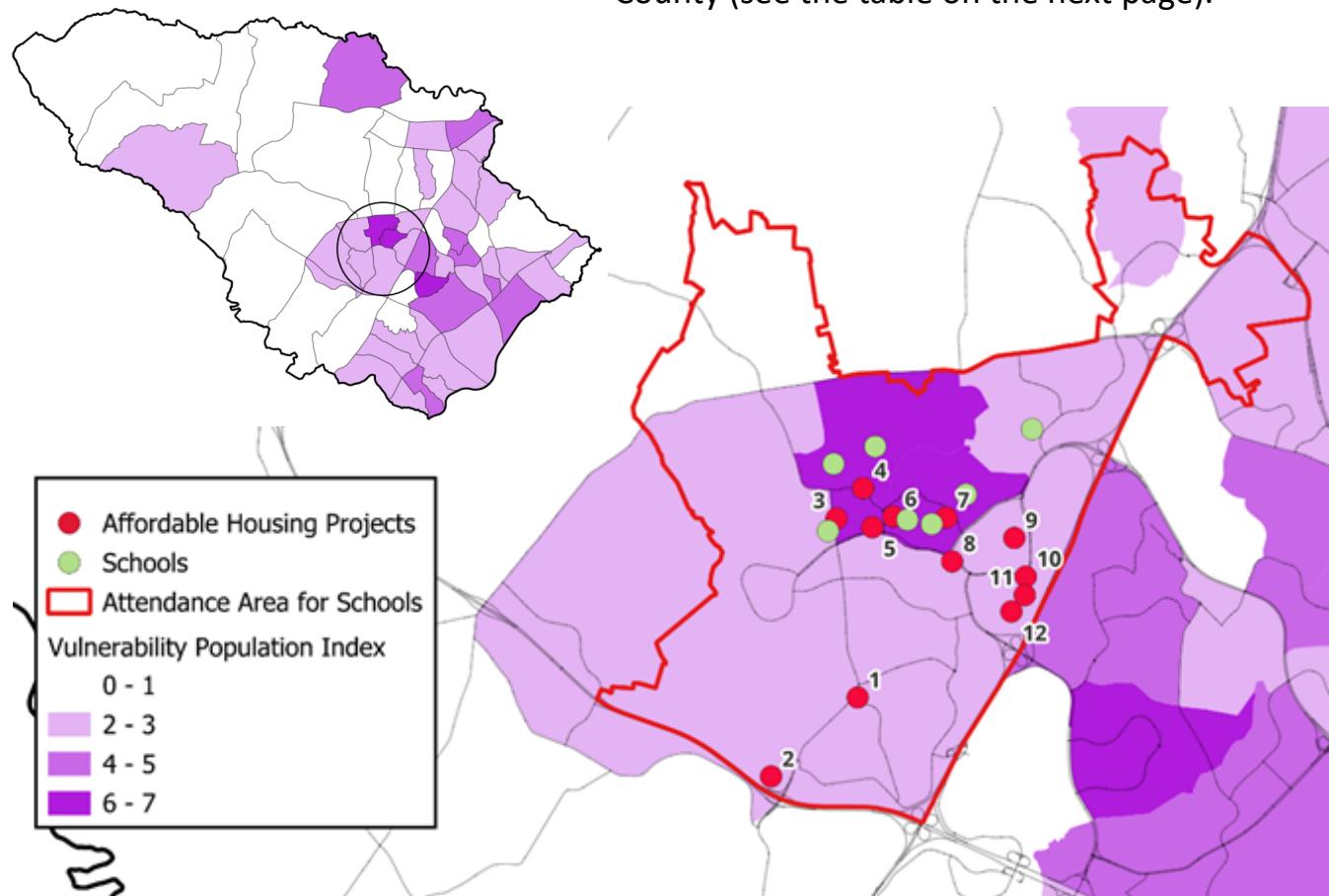
Carter G. Woodson: The Man Behind Black History Month

Dr. Carter G. Woodson dedicated his life to educating African Americans about the achievements and contributions of their ancestors.

Housing

After learning about the Governor's proposed housing bill (SB484), I contacted Maryland State Housing Secretary Jake Day to help him better understand the nuances of housing in Howard County. The Secretary expressed a common misconception that Howard County has not done its "fair share" for affordable housing. I reminded him that Columbia was founded on the fair housing concept and that higher-income enclaves elsewhere in the County mask Columbia's creeping segregation and poverty concentration. The Secretary also shared with me that Federal housing policies direct housing tax credits to poor neighborhoods that have 50% of households with incomes below 60% AMI or have a poverty rate of 25% or more. Click [here](#) for more.

I shared the following materials with the Secretary to demonstrate that current housing projects intended to alleviate concentrations elsewhere in the State are creating new pockets of poverty in specific low-income census tracts in Columbia. The map below shows 12 affordable housing projects in and around census tracts deemed "vulnerable" with 25% to 35% of the population with incomes below 200% of the poverty level. The majority of these housing projects are zoned for schools that have some of the highest poverty percentages in the County (see the table on the next page).



Housing

PROJECTS FEEDING INTO HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS					Assigned Schools & Free and Reduced Meals Percentages		
Project(s)		Units	Affordable Units				
1	Patuxent Commons	76	90% affordable	Clemens Crossing ES*	26.8%		
				Wilde Lake MS	42.1%		
				Atholton HS*	26.3%		
2	Robinson Overlook	48	9 units at 30% AMI 6 units at 40% AMI 6 units at 50% AMI 22 units at 60% AMI	Swansfield ES	42.3%		
				Clarksville MS*	7.5%		
				River Hill HS	8.1%		
3-7	Enterprise Projects*: Legacy at Twin Rivers, Ranleagh, Waverly Winds, Fall River Terrace, Rideout Heath	600	128 units at market rate ¹ 141 units at 50-80% AMI 165 units at 30-50% AMI	Bryant Woods ES*	55.3%		
				Longfellow ES	47.5%		
				Swansfield ES	42.3%		
				Harper's Choice MS*	54.3%		
				Wilde Lake MS	42.1%		
				Wilde Lake HS*	48.3%		
DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA PROJECTS							
Howard Hughes Responsibility			200 at <50% AMI 200 at 50-80% AMI				
8	Banneker	100	100% affordable	Bryant Woods ES*	55.3%		
				Wilde Lake MS	42.1%		
				Wilde Lake HS*	48.3%		
9	Transit Center	TBD	40-50% Low Income	TBD			
				Wilde Lake MS	42.1%		
				Wilde Lake HS*	48.3%		
10	Existing Library Site	TBD	~ 100 low & moderate income apartments	Running Brook ES*	57.3%		
				Wilde Lake MS	42.1%		
				Wilde Lake HS*	48.3%		
11	Artist Flats Apartments	174	43 at 30% AMI 44 at 50% AMI 66 at 80% AMI	Bryant Woods ES*	55.3%		
				Wilde Lake MS	42.1%		
				Wilde Lake HS*	48.3%		
12	Library	120	~ 100 low & moderate income apartments	TBD			
				Wilde Lake MS	42.1%		
				Wilde Lake HS*	48.3%		

¹ During a meeting with Enterprise on November 9th, 2023, staff indicated units labeled market rate would not be full market rate units. Rideout Heath is not included in the unit count.

* Schools projected to have a local capacity utilization over 100% in SY27-28 per the 2023 APFO School Capacity Chart.

Housing

Howard County has a 30% average of free and reduced meals (FARM), an indicator of poverty. This Countywide percentage is lower than most Counties in the State but there are huge percentage disparities among Howard County schools. The schools depicted in the chart below have some of the highest FARM percentages and are the primary recipient schools of the newly planned affordable housing projects in the County. In the past 20 years, poverty indicators at these schools have increased approximately by 30%. Children eligible for free or reduced meals have a family income of 185% to 130% of the Federal poverty level.

An Urban Institute project describes education as a “crucial avenue to economic and social mobility.” High quality schools boost academic achievement, college enrollment, and adult success. Schools shape students’ social identities, feelings of belonging, and life skills for upward mobility. A lack of economic diversity within schools adversely affects the academic achievement of students from lower-income families. Neighborhood and school segregation results in students of color attending schools with a much larger share of minority students and students from families experiencing poverty. High-poverty schools tend to lack highly qualified teachers, college prerequisites, advanced placement courses and extra curriculars. Click [here](#) for more.



County & Community Updates

Harriet Tubman Cultural Center Award

Congratulations to our very own Harriet Tubman Cultural Center for winning the Project of the Year Award for Historical Restoration/Preservation from the American Public Works Association Mid-Atlantic Chapter. Click [here](#) for more.

“Bag Lady” of Vantage House

Sue Buswell started collecting brown paper bags from meal deliveries during Covid. She figured that there must be a use for these barely used bags and she found one. The Howard County Food Bank provides bags to their clients and through Sue’s collection efforts totaling 100,000 bags and counting, the Food Bank has saved money and 6.25 tons of waste have been reduced. Vantage House held a special ceremony on January 18 to honor Sue, who recently passed away.



A cardboard likeness of Sue Buswell with her son and CAC representatives

Cannabis Workgroup Update

On February 12, the Council’s Cannabis Workgroup issued their final recommendations. Click [here](#) for more. Recommendations include

- Lobby the State to increase tax revenue to the localities from 5% to 20%.
- Seek to reserve 30% of the industry operators for minority and women owned businesses and social equity applicants.
- Track and report demographic information for cannabis arrests and charges.
- Fund evidenced-based interventions to prevent substance use among youth.
- Require warning labels and a THC symbol so that packaging is recognizable.
- Allow on-site consumption facilities and adopt operational regulations.
- Add cannabis-related industries to the Zoning regulations.

Community Reinvestment & Repair Fund

The Cannabis Reform Act of 2023 allocated a portion of tax revenue from adult-use cannabis sales for investment into communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition. Howard County will receive \$114.4 million in repair funds. The Howard County Council Cannabis Workgroup recommends that funds be used for mental health and substance abuse services, social equity and rent support programs, public safety programs, and, cannabis regulation and research.

School Updates

Blueprint Workgroup Report

At the joint Board of Education—County Council meeting on February 12, we received a briefing on the funding recommendations from the County Executive—sponsored Blueprint Workgroup. The following are the FY25 funding amounts for Blueprint requirements:

- \$3.5 million for pre-kindergarten, expanding it from half day to full day at five to six schools. By FY26, all Tier I low-income households will be in full day pre-kindergarten
- Career ladder salaries subject to collective bargaining
- \$3.5 million for technology investments.

Superintendent Bill Barnes explained that \$71.7 million is needed for Blueprint implementation and priority expenditures in FY25. Of these costs, 132.3 positions will be added for pre-kindergarten (55.6) and special education (51.5). The total FY25 budget request is \$1.13 billion with an increase of \$25.1 million (2.3%) above FY24. To close the budget gap, 347.85 positions will be eliminated. Of this total, 38 are currently vacant.

The eliminated positions include:

- 245.80 school positions
- 102 non-school positions.

Project SEARCH Applications

Deadline March 1

Applications are now being accepted for Project SEARCH, a one-year internship that prepares young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities for competitive employment. Click [here](#) for more.

State Coaches of the Year

River Hill High School Boys Golf Coach Matt Graves has been named among 18 high school coaches from across Maryland to be selected as 2022-2023 National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Coaches of the Year. Click [here](#) for more.

National Board Certified Teachers

Congratulations to the 119 teachers who earned their National Board Certification (NBC). Of this total, 95 were first-time achievers and 24 successfully renewed their certification. HCPSS now has 299 NBC Teachers. NBC is the highest-level credential in the educational profession. Click [here](#) for more.



FY25 Budget Process: Board of Education/HCPSS

February 26, 7pm Public Hearing

February 29, 1pm Budget Work Session

March 5, 4.30pm Adoptions of FY25 HCPSS Budget

Click [here](#) for more.

Keeping Up with Deb

District 4 School Visits



Reservoir High School principal
Dr. Karim Shortridge

Reservoir High School band



Limekiln Middle School Principal
Tammy Jones



Fulton Elementary School Administration



Cedar Lane School Administration

Keeping Up with Deb



Lunar New Year



Winter Restaurant Weeks

